Free distribution of condoms to prostitutes

292. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether use of condoms is one of the preventive measures for spread of AIDS;

(b) whether Government are aware that these are not distrbuted free and tutes have to buy them; and

(c) if not, the number of condoms distributed free in areas inhabited by prostitutes in Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Bangalore during the last six months?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Condoms are supplied free through Governmental agencies and at subsidised rates by social marketing networks. Since condoms were being primarily supplied for family planning activities, supply to commercial sex workers was not a priority under the Family Planning Programme. However, since the inception of the National AIDS Control Programme, whenever Non-Governmental Organizations or specific programme managers have requested for supply of condoms to the sex workers, such supplies have been made. According to the information made available by the concerned state governments, the number of condoms made available to the commercial sex workers, without any charges, during the list six months was 1 lakh pieces in Calcutta, 1.5 lakh pieces in Bombay, 30,000 pieces in Madras and 3 lakh pieces in Delhi. Nothing was distributed in Bangalore.

Import duty exemption for medical equipment

293. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under their consideration to grant import duty exemption for medical equipment required by hospitals;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any decision has been taken in this regard; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c) Under the Ministry of Finance Notifications No. 63/88-Cus. dated 1-3-88 and No. 64/88 Cus. dated 1-3-88, there is already a proc dure for grant of exemption from Customs Duty to various categories of hospitals for importing hospital equipment.

(d) Does not arise.

Encouragement to eyes donors

294. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of eyes donated by donors in the country during the last one year;

(b) what are the reasons for less number of donors; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to encourage donating of eyes?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) According to avaliable information from 51 eye banks, 12519 eyes were donated in 1992.

(b) The number of eyes donated have been gradually increasing. Although socio-cultural factors including misbeliefs affect the programme, efforts are constantly made to encourage eye donation.

(c) A nation wide eye donation drive is organised from 25th August to 8th September every year in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to remove misconceptions in this regard and to promote eye donation activities.